

Overview of *Let's THINK About Feelings*

Part II:

Tools to help children understand and regulate emotions and behavior

1. Don't Do It!

This activity focuses on **response inhibition**. It can be difficult to apply the principles of CBT in everyday life because we may habitually respond to a given situation with an ingrained, automatic response that is not helpful. In order to practice using new thoughts, we have to first be aware of, and then inhibit, this automatic response. **Don't Do It** includes games that introduce children to the concept of response inhibition and a home assignment to connect the concept to their everyday lives.

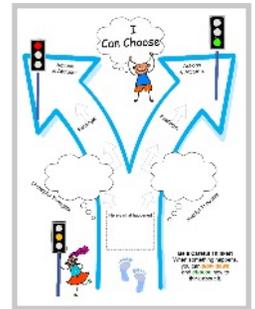
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2. Are You a Careful Thinker?

This group of activities focuses on **cognitive flexibility**. The **I Can Choose** activity introduces the concept of **cognitive flexibility**, a basic principle of CBT. The goal is to help children understand that, by changing the way that they perceive or think about situations, they can transform their emotional reactions, which in turn helps them choose the most optimal behavior.

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Are You a Careful Thinker? (Junior version)

This story explains the concept of cognitive flexibility in a way that is accessible for very young children.

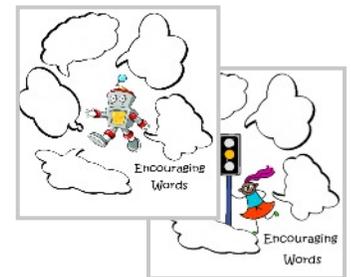
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Encouraging Words

These postcards are a "take-home" follow up to the **Are You a Careful Thinker?** activities. To help the child prepare for an upcoming stressful or challenging situation, the therapist helps the child formulate "encouraging words" - short, positive statements that they can use to replace automatic anxious, angry and/or upsetting thoughts. The statements are recorded on the **Be a Careful Thinker** postcards for use as a home assignment.

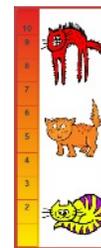
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3. The Cool Down

This activity focuses on **self-calming and self-monitoring**. In addition to inhibiting one's automatic and unhelpful thoughts in a stressful situation, it is also important to be aware of one's physiological responses and to take action to "calm down" once automatic responses are triggered. This activity teaches child-friendly techniques for self-calming. The ability to **self-monitor** one's arousal is an important skill in CBT, so this activity also includes a rating scale that can be printed and given to the child as an aid to self-monitoring in everyday life.

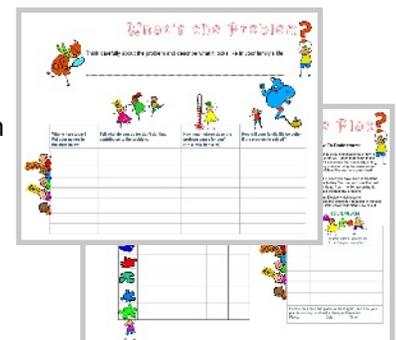
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4. What's The Problem, What's The Plan?

These activities focus on **cognitive flexibility and problem solving**. **What's The Problem, What's The Plan?** is designed for use with families. (There is also a version for use in individual therapy.) This activity structures the problem-solving process and also provides the child and family with a written summary of their decision-making to take home as a guide and reminder.

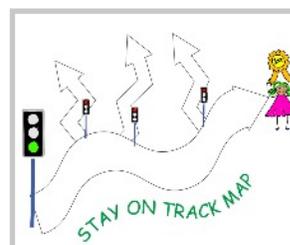
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Stay-on-Track Map

A follow up to **What's The Problem, What's The Plan?**, this home assignment provides extra support to help children better regulate their emotions and behavior in order to do their part in carrying out a plan

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Let's THINK about Feelings

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ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

Cognitive behavioral therapy “helps a person focus on his or her current problems and how to solve them. ... The therapist helps the patient learn how to identify distorted or unhelpful thinking patterns, recognize and change inaccurate beliefs, relate to others in more positive ways, and change behaviors accordingly.”

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/psychotherapies>

This resource provides child-friendly “tools” for therapists who have previous training and expertise in cognitive-behavioral therapy. It is expected that therapists using this resource already have a sound theoretical understanding of CBT and a repertoire of CBT interventions that they use with clients. This resource is intended to supplement those interventions, by providing activities and visual tools that make the principles of CBT more accessible for young people.

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